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MR. VAILL'S

NEW-YEAR'S SERMON.

AN
HISTORICAL SERMON

DELIVERED AT

BRIMFIELD,

JANUARY 7, 1821,

ON THE OCCASION OF

A NEW YEAR.

BY JOSEPH VAILL,
PASTOR OF THE CHURCH IN BRIMFIELD.

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The publication of the following Sermon delivered some years since, a copy of which was requested for the press at that time, has been inadvertently delayed. As its publication is still desired by many who heard it, and who are anxious to preserve a document which may be interesting to posterity; the author has revised it, and taken the liberty to introduce other facts that have occurred since it was written. In this form he gives it to his friends. If it should contribute to their gratification, or in any way promote their good, he will feel himself amply compensated.

SERMON.

ZECHARIAH I. 5.

YOUR FATHERS, WHERE ARE THEY ? AND THE PROPHETS, DO
THEY LIVE FOREVER ?

IN the rapid flight of time, we are brought to the commencement of a new year. We have completed one important period of our lives, and have entered upon another. It is a period admirably suited to reflection. It places us on an eminence, from which we may look back upon the past, and forward to the future ; and we can hardly fail to be reminded of the shortness of time, and the transitory nature of all earthly things. Various are the subjects which such an occasion as the commencement of a new year suggests, as profitable subjects of reflection. At this time, with a view to gratify, and I could hope profit my audience, I propose to present before you some of the principal facts relating to the first settlement, and the subsequent history of the town of Brimfield ; together with the church, making the latter the more prominent subject of remark.

The history of our own country and state, and especially of our own town, should be familiar to every child. It is calculated to remind us not only of the providence, but of the goodness of God, and to lead us to value our privileges, when viewed in contrast with those our fathers enjoyed. It also reminds us very strikingly of the rapidity with which one generation succeeds another, on the stage of life ; and teaches us the importance of doing with our might what our hand findeth to do. Our design in the following discourse, will not therefore be unsuitable to the occasion of a new year ; while it will lead us to adopt the very forcible interrogation of the prophet Zechariah, which I have chosen for my text, “ Your fathers, where are they ? and the prophets, do they live forever ? ”

As a majority of the first settlers of the town of Brimfield emigrated from Springfield, it may not be improper to state, that the settlement of that town commenced in the year 1636, sixteen years after the landing of the pilgrims at Plymouth. The first settlers emigrated from Roxbury, and are said to have possessed all those distinguishing traits of character, that gave to our forefathers, the name of Puritans. The settlement of Springfield progressed with considerable rapidity, and in a little more than twenty years, there were no less than seventy three male inhabitants in that town. In Octo-

ber 1675 it was burnt by the Indians. From this calamity however it soon recovered, and although visited in one or two instances with distressing sickness, the number of inhabitants rapidly increased.—I now come to Brimfield.

This town was granted by the General Court in the year 1701, to a number of petitioners inhabitants of Springfield. Of these petitioners, the court appointed a committee of six,* to make grants of lands, to provide for the most advantageous settlement of the plantation, and to manage all its prudential affairs. The township as originally granted was eight miles square, and was designated by the Plantation adjoining Springfield east of Springfield; to which the committee, for the sake of convenience, as is stated in their records, gave the name of Brimfield. At that time there were no settlements in the town. The committee entered immediately upon measures to carry forward this object, according to the conditions on which the town was granted by the General Court. The committee, together with twenty other persons, came out from Springfield September 22d, 1701, for the purpose of viewing the place, and fixing upon a suitable spot for the centre of the proposed town. After spending two days, they returned, not having satisfied

*The names of the committee were the following, viz: Col. *John Pynchon*, *Pelatia Glover*, Deac. *James Warriner*, Lieut. *David Morgan*, *Joseph Stebbins*, Capt. *Thomas Colton*.

themselves on this point. A second attempt was made, and being still undetermined, they deputed five men to make a third attempt ; three of whom came out on the 10th of November the same year. After spending two days in viewing the township, they returned with the report that there was good land in the tract, in different places, which might in process of time, possibly accommodate sixty or seventy families with a comfortable living, and decided that the hill which they denominated Chicopee hill, was the most eligible spot for the centre of the town.* The first grants of land were made December 31st, 1701, to thirteen persons, on condition that those to whom the grants were made, should begin the following spring to subdue their land ; which condition it is believed these first grantees did not fulfill. After this, I cannot learn that other grants were made for a number of years. Very little seems to have been done towards the settlement of the place for a considerable time, owing probably, to the embarrassments occasioned by the war with the French and Indians ; and it is not impossible that a distressing sickness that prevailed at Springfield in 1711, which carried off a number of the principal men, might have had some influence in retarding the settlement.

* This is the hill between Brimfield and Monson—principally lying in Monson.

In 1717, the proprietor's committee petitioned the General Court, that the township might be extended three miles further east, stating that as the best of the land lay in that direction, the place could not well be settled as a town, without that extension of its original limits, as most of the original plantation of which they had the care, was exceedingly mountainous, and barren.* This petition was granted, which produced a change in the first plan for the centre of the town, and, what is now Brimfield was selected for this purpose. This of course became the head of the settlement of the whole township, which then included what is now Monson, the Districts of South Brimfield† and Holland, and that part of Western and Palmer which lies south of the Chicopee river.

After this, the settlement of the town progressed with greater rapidity. Previous to its extension, a number of families had removed here from Springfield; many more soon followed. The greater part of the first proprietors settled in the eastern section, in what is now Brimfield. Among those who came from Springfield are found the names of *Sherman, Hitchcock,† Brooks, Morgan, Burt, Charles,*

* The hill directly east of Brimfield Meeting-house was the eastern boundary of the original grant.

† Now Wales.

‡ *Nathaniel Hitchcock* the ancestor of the present *Hitchcock* families was the first man that settled with a *family* in Brimfield, as early as 1714, or 15.

Lumbard, Collins, Keep, Scott, Stebbins, Wariner, Nichols, Graves, and Bliss. The *Thompson* family emigrated from Woburn. The *Blodget* and *Russel* families from Lexington, and the *Hoar* family from Concord. The descendants of most of these families are still here, from the third to the sixth, and in some instances, to the seventh generation. *Moses Brooks*, a son of *Deliverence Brooks* is said to have been the first male child born in this town. His birth was in the year 1717.

Until the year 1730, all the prudential concerns of the plantation, were managed by the committee of the original proprietors. That year, the inhabitants preferred a petition to the General Court, that they might be incorporated, and enjoy the rights and privileges of other towns. This petition was granted February 22d, 1730, and consequently the committee ceased to have any further jurisdiction. On the 6th of March 1730 was held the first regular town meeting.

The town continued of its original limits in point of territory until 1760. That year the inhabitants in the western part preferred a petition, by the consent of the town, to the General Court to be incorporated as a district; which petition was granted.* Two years after, the south and south east part became sep-

* In choosing a Representative they still united with Brimfield.

arate districts, and the town was then reduced to about its present limits, while from it were taken, what is now the town of Monson, and the districts of Wales, and Holland.

The burying ground in this town, the same now used, was laid out on the 20th of June, 1720, and for thirty five years, was the only grave yard in the whole township. So it appears, that some of the first inhabitants of each of the places taken from this town, are buried in that ground, where we still continue to bury our dead. In the year 1755, the inhabitants in the west part petitioned the town, to have a burying ground laid out in that quarter, as so much inconvenience attended bringing their dead such a distance for interment. This petition was granted, and a burying ground of two acres was laid out a little east of what is now the centre of Monson, which for many years was the principal grave yard in that town.

Early attention was paid by the first settlers of the town to the interests of education. But scanty indeed were their privileges in this particular, compared with those now enjoyed. Nothing like a regular school was established, until about the year 1731. The town then voted that there should be a school, but no school house was erected till some time after this. The school was kept in private dwellings, by one instructor for the whole town,

who moved from one part to another, dividing the instruction for different sections, as the town directed. The school was first divided into four quarters; two for the centre, one for the west, and one for the south part. The first school house was built in the centre, in 1748. In 1755 a grammar school was established, which continued for many years, and was kept in different parts of the town. In relation to the means of education, we cannot avoid noticing the contrast between the privileges now enjoyed, and those enjoyed in the days of our fathers. There are now ten school districts in this town, and from five to six hundred children, that in the winter season, attend on the means of education. And in what was the original township, where ninety years ago, one instructor only was employed in a season for the whole, there are now more than thirty teachers, and not less than fifteen hundred children, that attend in the winter season, on school instruction. Besides a flourishing academy has been established, within the limits of what was the original plantation, where hundreds of youth have received instruction in the higher branches, and no inconsiderable number have been prepared for college.

Our fathers being the descendants of the puritans, inherited it is believed, something of their spirit. Accordingly we find, that it was among their early measures, to provide for the

worship of God, and the enjoyment of góspel ordinances. In reverting to the ecclesiastical affairs of the town, which I designed to make a prominent part in these sketches, I would remark, that of the first twenty years after the establishment of a church, I shall be able to present but few facts, as the church records were unfortunately burnt in 1748, when the Rev. Mr. *Bridgham's* house was destroyed by fire.

As early as 1721, the inhabitants of the town, by the direction of the proprietor's committee, held a meeting for the purpose of taking measures to build a meeting-house. A vote was passed to this effect, and in the course of the year 1722, a house 45 by 40 was raised, and covered on the spot, where the present meeting-house stands. The building for a long period, was but partially finished ; but by slow degrees, although an indifferent house at best, was so far completed, as to form a comfortable place for the public worship of God. It stood for more than eighty years ; until it gave place to this commodious and beautiful house, which was erected in 1805, and completed the following year. Although the meeting-house was considerably east of the centre of the original township, I cannot learn that any difficulty arose with regard to its site. Nature has formed a most desirable spot, and there is reason to believe that the congregational house of

worship will stand on this ground, as long as the town shall have existence.

About the time of voting to build a meeting-house, the people voted to employ a minister to preach the word to them. The Rev. *Richard Treat* was the first minister ordained over the church and people in this town. This took place, so near as I can determine, about the year 1725. Previous to his ordination, I cannot learn that a church existed. It was probably gathered at that time. A difficulty arose between Mr. *T.* and the people in 1733, and the matter was referred to a council, the result of which I am not able to state. It appears however that his dismissal soon followed, which took place the 27th of March, 1734. Mr. *Treat* came from Glastenbury, (Conn.) and graduated at Yale College, 1719. Of his particular character I know nothing. His ministry continued about nine years. After his removal, the church made several unsuccessful efforts to obtain a successor. For more than two years, sundry persons were employed to preach the word. Mr. *Noah Merrick*, Mr. *Sampson Stoddard*, and Mr. *Caleb Rice*, received each a call to settle, which they declined accepting.

Mr. *James Bridgham* received an unanimous call to settle in the work of the ministry the 29th of January, 1736, which call he accepted, and was ordained the 9th of June of the same

year.* His ministry continued forty years. He died in this town September 17th, 1776, at the age of sixty nine. His dust lies in yonder graveyard. Mr. B. came from the region of Boston, and graduated at Harvard College, in the year 1726. He is said to have been a man of respectable talents, and to have performed the duties of his office, to general acceptance. With a few exceptions, harmony prevailed among the people during his ministry. He was regarded as an evangelical preacher, and among the elderly inhabitants, his name is remembered with respect. Mr. *Bridgham* sometime previous to his death, labored under such bodily infirmity, as to be unable to perform the duties of his office. Rev. *Nehemiah Williams* was employed to supply the pulpit, who after preaching a short time, received an unanimous call to settle here November 8th, 1774. He accepted the call, and was ordained colleague pastor with Mr. *Bridgham* February 9th, 1775, at the age of twenty six. Mr. B. died in about a year and an half after Mr. W's ordination. Mr. *Williams* continued in the ministry here twenty one years, and about nine months; when in the midst of his days, and usefulness, he was removed by death, in the forty eighth

* The following ministers with their delegates composed the ordaining council, viz, Mr. *Baxter*, of Medfield, Mr. *Devotion*, of Suffield, (Conn.) Mr. *Williams*, of Springfield, (Longmeadow Society) Mr. *Cheney*, of Brookfield, and Mr. *Peabody*, of Natick.

year of his age ; leaving a beloved wife, and a numerous family to mourn the loss of a kind husband, and of a tender, and affectionate parent. “Our fathers, where are they? and the *prophets*, do they live forever?” But “precious in the eyes of the Lord is the death of his saints,” and “the memory of the just is blessed.” Of the character of Mr. *Williams* I need say nothing. His name is remembered with respect, and affection ; and is handed down to posterity, only to be revered. He possessed to a great extent, the confidence of his people, and a good degree of harmony prevailed during his ministry. As a public speaker, he was universally acceptable. He was an evangelical, and plain preacher ; and a volume of his sermons published after his death, will ever be read with satisfaction, by those who love the truth. After a somewhat short, but it is believed useful ministry, he died universally lamented. Mr. *Williams* was born at Hadley, and graduated at Harvard College in the year 1769.

In the death of Mr. *Williams*, the church and people experienced a loss which was long felt, and deeply deplored. He was succeeded by the Rev. *Clark Brown* who was installed here June 20th, 1798, one year and about seven months after the death of his predecessor.*

* Mr. *Williams* died November 26, 1796.

Mr. *Brown* was dismissed November 2d, 1803, agreeable to his own request, as is recorded by his own hand, on the record of the church. His ministry here continued a little more than five years. He is said to have been a man of gifts, and of uncommon fluency. As to his religious sentiments, he could not be considered as strictly evangelical, nor as distinguished, either for patience, or prudence. He has gone to give an account of his ministry, and over those unhappy difficulties that existed during his connection with this people, we will pass in silence, remembering how frail is man.

After Mr. *Brown's* dismissal, the church remained destitute of a pastor, no less than four years. In the mean time, various candidates were employed, to some of whom was tendered a call, which they did not accept. Mr. *Warren Fay* received an invitation to settle here August 17th, 1808, which he accepted, and was ordained pastor of the church, the second day of November of the same year. He was dismissed at his own request June 26th, 1811, after a ministry among this people, of two years and eight months. Mr. *Fay* graduated at Harvard College in the year 1807. He still lives, and is occupying another extensive, and important field of usefulness. It appears that Mr. *Fay* received a call from the church, to resettle in the ministry here, but in this the town did not concur. Various persons were

employed for the space of two years, to supply the pulpit.

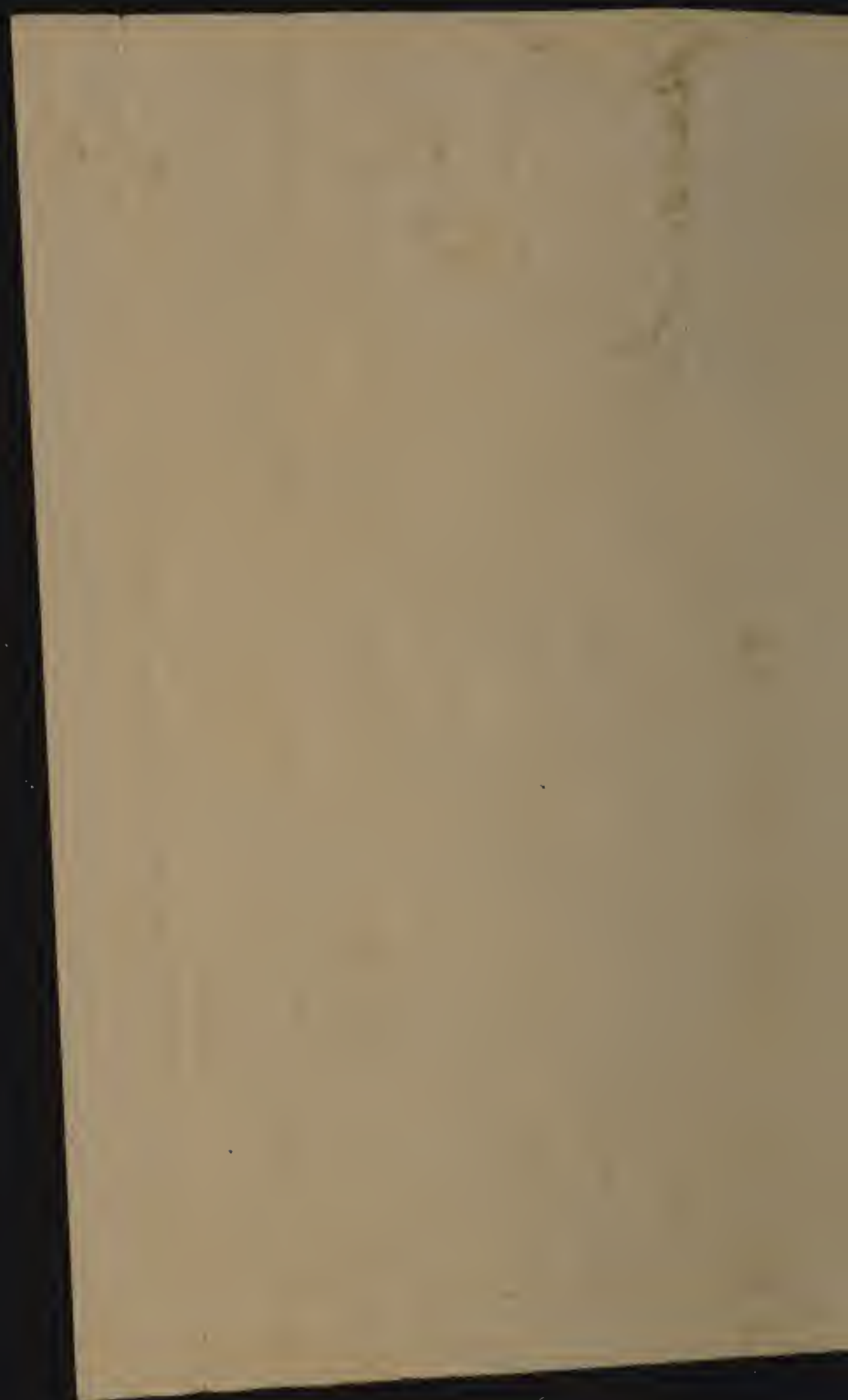
Your present pastor came to this town by particular request from the people, the 20th of October, 1813. He received a call to settle here the 29th of November of the same year—which call he accepted; and on the second day of February 1814, he was solemnly consecrated to the work of the ministry, and set over this church and people in the Lord.

The church, which will next claim our attention, we suppose was gathered about the year 1725. From the earliest record extant in 1748, under the ministry of Mr. *Bridgham*, the church consisted at that time, of about eighty members. From that period, to the close of his ministry, the space of twenty six years, seventy were received, a part of whom doubtless, by recommendation from other churches. During the ministry of Mr. *Williams*, ninety were added to the church from the world, and thirty seven by recommendation, making 127 in the whole. Scarcely any year passed without the admission of some, though it does not appear that more than ten, or eleven, were admitted in the course of any one year, under the ministry of Mr. *Williams*. It is not known how many were received to the church, under the ministry of Mr. *Brown*. While Mr. *Fay* continued here, fifteen or twenty were admitted. The church, at the

Westchester or Springfield

Mason was set off from Springfield in 1760
South Springfield (now called Wales) in 1762
Holland was set off in 1796

If the Pth prove a settlement in Springfield
they must prove it to have been within the
present limits of the town of Springfield
Statute 1793. ch 34-



time I was placed over it, consisted of 70 members, of whom 29 were males, and 41 females. Of this number, at the present time, February 2d, 1829,* but thirty eight remain. Of the 32 who have been removed, 26 sleep in their graves, the other six have removed their relation to other churches. Since my ordination, 270 have been admitted, including those who have been received by letters of recommendation from other churches, making an average of 18 for each year. Of this number, thirty have been removed by death, making fifty six that have died during the fifteen years of my ministry, being members of the church; forty nine have been dismissed and recommended to other churches; one has been excommunicated. The present number of the members of the church, is 227, of whom 72 are males, and 155 females. I have administered the ordinance of baptism to 437, including children, and adults, making an average of 29 for each year.

The names of the several deacons of the church, I conclude from its first establishment, are *John Sherman, David Morgan, Henry Burt, Luke Blashfield, Joseph Hitchcock, Jonathan Morgan, Issacher Brown, Solomon*

*The statements that follow bring down the history of the church to the close of the fifteenth year of my ministry, as the publication of the sermon has been delayed, from the time it was originally written, to this period.

Hoar, Samuel Tarbell, Samuel Brown; the four last of whom continue to this day.

From the preceding statements, it does not appear, that any thing like a general revival of religion was experienced among this people, in the days of our fathers. Yet God did not forsake the vine which he had planted in this wilderness. His goings were visible to his saints, and their hearts were doubtless often refreshed with the drops of his mercy, while one and another were made to feel his quickening power, and were gathered into the fold of the Redeemer. It was reserved to our days, and ours has been the joy of witnessing showers of divine grace. The happy seasons are still fresh in our recollection, when the windows of heaven were opened, and we were permitted to inquire, "who are these that fly as a cloud and as doves to their windows." These seasons will be remembered we trust, by many, with joy through eternity; as those, in which they made their espousals to Christ, and commenced their immortal song.

The first general revival of religion experienced among this people, commenced in the autumn of 1818, and continued without any very sensible abatement till the following spring, the space of about five months. The work at first, was gradual in its progress, and was confined chiefly to one section of the town. It soon however reached the centre, and other

parts more remote became the theatre of illustrious displays of divine grace. Meetings were frequent, full, and exceedingly solemn. God was in very deed in the midst of us ; his own almighty arm was felt, and while multitudes were brought to tremble under a sense of sin and guilt, many were made joyful in his house of prayer. About one hundred and twenty were numbered as the hopeful subjects of the work. One hundred and five were admitted to the church as the fruits of this revival, and in the course of one year ; a few of whom have gone to give an account of their stewardship, and some, we fear, have left their first love. With devout gratitude we record this revival, to the praise and glory of divine grace.

Although this happy season was followed by a very visible, and affecting declension, yet God, in his boundless condescension and mercy, had yet another blessing in store for us. In the autumn of 1825, there began to be a shaking among the dry bones. Christians were animated, and encouraged, with the prospect, that God was about to visit us again ; though the church generally did not seem to be awake. But the hopes of those who were anxiously waiting for the consolation of Israel, were in some good measure realized. The spirit again descended, and his influence began to be felt, particularly among the youth in the eastern section of the town. Other youth, in

other parts, were soon heard inquiring what they should do to be saved. Although the work was principally confined to the younger class, yet it was a season of deep and solemn interest. For more than a year, there was no sensible decline in religious feeling; in the mean time one, and another, were brought to bow to the sceptre of Christ. This revival brought into the church, forty three persons, the majority of whom, were from the beloved youth of this people. Many, who were the subjects of painful conviction, we have reason to fear fainted, and went back, while others who entertained a hope of their being renewed,—have made no public profession of their faith. Thus it has pleased God, in two signal instances, to manifest his power and glory in the midst of us, in the conviction and conversion of sinners, within the last ten years; and while we give thanks to his name, for these wonderful displays of his grace, let us not cease to pray, “revive us again, that thy people may rejoice in thee.”

The confession of faith, and covenant early adopted by this church, although general, and brief, was strictly evangelical. That used at the time of my settlement, was drawn up by a committee of the church, after the dismissal of Mr. *Brown*, and at the union of the church, which during his ministry, was unhappily rent in twain. This was adopted the 25th of June,

1806, and continued to be used until 1824,—when after due deliberation and prayer, the church, on the 27th of April, voted a substitute, which while it accords with the former confession, presents a more full, and definite statement, of the views of the church, with respect to christian doctrine and duty. During the ministry of Mr. *Williams*, and since, the discipline of the church to some extent has been maintained; but in this particular, there is doubtless to this day, a lamentable deficiency.

Most of the people of this town, from its first settlement, have continued of one religious denomination. As early however as 1734, a number in the south part professed themselves baptists, and withdrew their support from the congregational society. To this may be traced the establishment of a baptist society in Wales, which has existed for many years. Within the present limits of this town, very little sectarian interest has prevailed, much less than in most of the neighbouring towns. The people have generally been in the habit of attending public worship on the sabbath, a habit which it is hoped they will never lose.

Our forefathers were doubtless called to experience many hardships, which, to a greater or less degree, are the consequence of the first settlement of any place. But I cannot learn that they were ever greatly annoyed by the Indians, of whom, there were many in the coun-

try at that time. It is said that two guard or block houses were kept, for a considerable period after the settlement commenced, whither the people could resort at night, or in case of alarm.

The town, from its first settlement, has generally been healthy. The most sweeping and distressing sickness ever experienced, is still fresh in our recollection ; when many in a very sudden and surprising manner were cut down in the midst of their days. I allude to a very malignant fever that prevailed in the winter of 1816. I cannot reflect on the scenes I then witnessed, without the most painful emotions. May God save us from another such awful calamity. In the years 1775, 6, & 7, the throat distemper prevailed among the children, and the dysentery to a considerable extent, in which years, there was an unusual mortality. The number of deaths since the settlement of the town, it is impossible accurately to state. During the ministry of Mr. *Williams*, it was 344. Since my residence here, up to January 1829, it is 370, making an average of a little more than twenty four for each year. The whole number that have died, during the twenty one years of Mr. *Williams*' ministry, and the fifteen of my own, is 714. When we recollect that almost one hundred and twenty years have passed since the settlement of the town commenced, and that more than 700 have died in

thirty six years, it will not be extravagant to suppose, that nearly as many have died, as the present number of inhabitants, it being a little rising of 1600 ;—a great proportion of whom it is supposed lie in yonder field of graves. “Our fathers where are they? and the prophets, do they live forever?” The sixth generation from the first settlers of this town is now with us. And I cannot avoid reminding you of the fact, a fact, by which your present pastor should be admonished to be up and doing, that four, of those who once spake to this people in the name of the Lord, have gone, most of them long since, to give an account of their ministry.

Before closing these sketches, I can hardly forbear calling your attention to the peculiar smiles of heaven, in the great increase, and prosperity of the ancient, and respectable township of Brimfield. In the territory where one hundred years ago, there were a few scattered families, planted in the wilderness, toiling for a bare subsistence ; there are now pleasant villages, handsome buildings, well cultivated farms, large manufacturing establishments, and no small share of wealth. And on that ground, where it was once thought, sixty or seventy families might possibly obtain a bare living, there are now, between four and five thousand people, four congregational churches, three baptist churches, six houses of public worship, and probably not far from seven hundred mem-

bers of the church of Christ. To the rich blessing of God would we cheerfully ascribe all this, while we devoutly look to him, that these thousands of immortal beings, may be brought to feel the power of divine grace, and be prepared to stand monuments of sovereign mercy forever.

In reviewing these sketches, many interesting reflections are naturally suggested, a few of them only I can barely notice. We are led to reflect on the goodness of God to our fathers, and our obligation of gratitude for the many precious blessings which, under God, we enjoy, through their instrumentality. Many were their hardships. To their lot it fell to subdue the wilderness, and to endure the privations of new and uncultivated settlements. Ours, is the privilege of reaping the fruit of their labours. We enjoy institutions planned by their wisdom, we cultivate fields subdued by their toil, we inhabit a territory defended by their valour. This spot once desolate and dreary, is now clad in beauty, and filled with plenty. Our children are taught in our schools, and the praises of Jehovah are heard in his temple. What a trust have we received! and how greatly are we indebted to our fathers, and to posterity. My friends, let us not suffer the privileges transmitted to us, to perish in our hands,—but let us give them, with large increase, to our descendants. By greater atten-

tion to agriculture, our farms may be rendered more productive ; our system of school education may yet be greatly improved ; and above all, we are to preserve the institutions of religion, and diligently observe all its sacred ordinances. It is not for ourselves only, that we act. We are living for posterity. Amazing and solemn is our responsibility. As men and citizens, as a community, as a church, as christians, and as candidates for eternity, let us be faithful. Let our conversation, our labours, our example, and even our suffrages plead for God.

In reviewing the condition of our fathers, as contrasted with ours, what occasion do we find for gratitude to God, that our life is fallen in happier days. How beyond comparison greater, are our privileges than theirs. And more than this, it is our favoured lot to live in a day of revivals, of christian charities, of holy enterprise, when the kingdom of Christ is rapidly extending its borders. Yes, we live at a period of divine wonders ; on the confines of the latter day glory of the church. We see those things which our fathers desired to see, but died without the sight. And shall we not send up our note of gratitude to Heaven, and rise up to the glorious work, to which the word and providence of Jehovah are so urgently inviting us.

But in reviewing these sketches, we are doubtless *most* forcibly struck, with the solemn consideration of the rapid flight of time, and the shortness and vanity of human life. "Your fathers, where are they?" Ah brethren, the grassy hillock, and the mouldering monument in yonder cemetery, furnish an answer to this solemn interrogatory. The winds of an hundred winters have swept over our fields, since our first fathers began their sleep of death. Two generations have almost entirely disappeared, since civilized men first planted themselves on this ground. A most affecting lesson indeed, in this view, does the history of our fathers set before us. In what has been, we are taught what is still to come. With what solemn interest ought we to inquire, where shall we be, when a few more years, it may be days only, have passed over us? Look forward for the comparatively short space of fifty years. What scenes do you witness! what changes do you behold! The sanctuary will still be visited. But for those who now compose this assembly, you will look in vain. The greater part will have joined the greater congregation underground, and will be known only as among the slumbering nations of the dead. Instead of the fathers will be the children, and these seats will be occupied by those now unborn. Ah! brethren, "the time is short." In a little mo-

ment we shall all be gone, and the places that now know us, will know us no more forever. The dwellings we now occupy, will soon be occupied by others. Our seats by the fire side, and in the social circle will be vacant, and all that now fills our minds, and engages our eager pursuit, will be to us as though it had not been. All, all will be lost, in one vast, unutterably vast eternity.

My brethren, while the sepulchres of our fathers remain with us unto this day, let us be admonished of our own approaching dissolution. "What manner of person ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness." Let us gird up the loins of our minds, watch and be sober. Standing on the threshold of a new year, the hidden events of which, will doubtless be to some of us of everlasting moment; it is with a heart full of solicitude, I look over this congregation. With the deepest interest in the welfare of the respected people of my charge, who are endeared to me by a thousand tender recollections; I pray God to bless you, and give you grace to keep his commandments, and to walk in his ways, that you may be an holy, and in that way a happy people, now and forever.

I have been thinking of you very much lately
 and wondering how you are getting on. I hope
 you are well and happy. I have been very busy
 lately but I have managed to find some time
 to write you. I have been thinking of you
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 getting on. I hope you are well and happy.

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